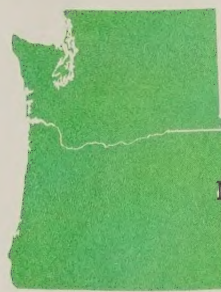


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Forest Service News



Pacific Northwest Region
P.O. Box 3623
Portland, Oregon 97208

(503) 221-2971

News contacts: Merle Pugh
Jerry Gause

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Forest Vegetation Management Statement Filed

Methods of managing competing vegetation on national forest lands are discussed in a draft environmental impact statement released this week by the USDA Forest Service.

The statement, filed with the Environmental Protection Agency, describes and evaluates seven alternatives for managing competing vegetation in the Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Region. Chemical, mechanical, biological, manual, and thermal management methods are considered. Biological methods include the use of grazing animals and predatory insects. Thermal methods include use of prescribed or controlled fire. The purpose of the study and statement is to determine a vegetation management program for use throughout the national forests of Oregon and Washington.

The Forest Service is seeking public review and comments on the impact statement, according to Regional Forester R.E. Worthington, who said comments must be received by May 5 to be considered in preparation of the final impact statement.

Copies of a summary of the draft statement are being mailed to persons who have expressed an interest in the subject. Copies of the summary or the full statement are available from Forest Service offices in Oregon and Washington. Public libraries also have copies for public use. To answer the public's questions and aid understanding of the significance of managing vegetation, the 19 national forest supervisors in the Pacific Northwest Region will be scheduling open houses in March or April, Worthington said.

(more)

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Reserve

Primary purposes of vegetation management are to:

1. Reestablish conifers (evergreens) on harvested, burned, or brush-covered lands capable of sustained yield of wood fiber.
2. Maintain desirable mixture of established conifers and other vegetation to optimize production of multiple-use benefits, including fiber and water production, recreation, wildlife, and visual quality.
3. Reestablish forage or grasses on range and forest lands capable of sustained yield of forage.
4. Encourage desirable plants for wildlife needs.
5. Promote public safety on roads, trails, railroads, powerline and telephone rights-of-way, and campgrounds by increasing visibility, removing hazards and eliminating noxious weeds.
6. Reduce hazardous forest fuel concentrations to aid in controlling wildfires.
7. Maintain roads, buildings, campgrounds, and other facilities to insure long life, safety, and efficiency.

The impact statement is an analysis that describes available methods and presents a framework for evaluating and selecting a preferred management program, Worthington said. The analysis was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and Forest Service regulations and policy.

Comments should be mailed to Randy Perkins, USDA Forest Service, Project Coordinator, P.O. Box 3623, Portland, OR 97208.

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